



July/26/1894

Dear Journal,

I am about to embark on an exciting journey to the United States of America from Russia. By the way my name is Charles Kelman, I am 22 years old, and I used to have small grocery store in town, until the czar came and took away my shop. I come from Russia I am leaving because the czar has been treating me and other Russian Jews badly. It is the year 1894, the police have closed synagogues, and they have set tariffs on the Jews. I want to leave my country where I have been treated like a foreigner and go to a country where I have freedom from oppression. My wife Bertha (19 years old) and I will leave Russia in August and board a ship called "The Nina". The only problem is that we do not have too many rubles so we will have to board the steerage (the bottom of the ship where people who do not have too much money live for the ride.)

August/2/1894

Dear Journal,

We have had to bring our own food, because they charge too much for food on the ship. We brought boiled eggs, black bread, herring, kugel (crunchy noodles, with cottage cheese and other stuff), cooked meat, brisket meat with potato and onions, and honey cake. The conditions on the ship are terrible. It is too crowded and hot and many people are sick, the people who are

sick hope that they will recover before the inspections at Ellis Island because if they are sick they will be denied and be sent back to there original country. I have met a few people who are also Russian Jews. Their names are Pasha, who is married to Alisa, Lev who is not married and a family named Levine, who have six small children. They worry that they have lice and will not pass the inspections and will have to go back to Russia.

August/10/1894

Dear Journal,

We are almost half way through our journey, we have been on the ship for ten days and hopefully our trip will be over soon. I have brought with me a picture of the rest of my family hoping they will also America. Good news I have just heard that my brother Louis is going to come to America maybe we can shelter him until he can find a place of his own. Bertha has brought her wedding band, we hope we will not have to sell the band. I worry that I will not get back the old job that I had as a grocer. I might not even get a job, unfortunately. I have also brought a pocket watch, which has been passed down in our family for years, unfortunately we may have to sell that too if I don't get a job.

August/27/1894

Dear Journal,

Finally our long, hot, dirty journey to the "Promised Land" has ended. The children on board are so restless and filthy because of playing and lack of sanitary conditions. Many of the passengers are very hungry and worry they will not pass the inspections. Today we have entered New York Harbor. I was astonished by the sight of the Statue of Liberty it must be hundreds of feet high, my wife Bertha almost fainted she was so overwhelmed. Today we go down the ramp of our old ship and enter the ferry that takes to Ellis Island. We are very nervous when we enter Ellis Island. We all put down our huge trunks full of clothes and other stuff that we could pack away quickly in the baggage room. There are so many languages spoken here and it is so loud.

August/28/1894

Dear Journal,

Soon we will be examined by doctors who make sure we are not carrying any diseases. Bertha and I are scared because we have seen people be rejected and we worry that that might happen to us. We are seeing very painful inspections not only in physical, but emotional. A very painful inspection is looking for trachoma. What the doctors had to do to find out if you had it or not was look on the other side of your eye, when they did that to me I almost cried. When Bertha and I got finished with inspections we felt blessed and we were happy that the inspections were

finally over with. I will never forget that terrible experience of smelly rooms, long waits and undignified inspections. We have enough American money to buy a railway ticket to Newark, N.J. where we will settle near other people from our village in Russia because we would like to be with people with whom we are familiar.

November/20/1894

Dear Journal,

It is right before this so called holiday, Thanksgiving. This is an American holiday, to give thanks for our families and our blessings. We are also fortunate to be able to celebrate with a member of my family, Louis. We have decided to celebrate this as we have much to be thankful for. I have gotten a job being a grocer and we did not have to sell the wedding band and the pocket watch. I think America has turned out to be a pretty good thing for Bertha and me. During Thanksgiving, we will eat kugel, brisket, turkey, and other American foods that we have never tasted before. It is very exciting to be in a new country. Many of our friends from Russia live near by in Newark. We are all poor, but are happy to have the freedom to celebrate and to worship the religion of our choice.



June/22/1904

Dear Journal,

I am sorry that I have not written you an entry for so many years but a lot has been going on. Bertha has a had a baby named Isador, I have owned quite a few grocery stores in the past few years, During the time that I was selling the stores I would also sell insurance. For a little while I owned a horse and wagon but then I sold it. I now live in the Ironbound part of Newark. I have now been studying the American cultures and arithmetic and I am now reading a little. I now know the Pledge of Allegiance, it goes like this "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." Right now I do not really have a job. I am now looking in the newspaper, hoping to see an ad for a shop for sale. As for now Bertha, Isador and I are living in an apartment, although we usually live over the shop.

August/2/1904

Dear Journal,

Good news! my brother Louis has offered me a job at a grocery store. He and I will share the business until we sell the shop. There are lots to do in the shop. We must paint, and clean,

and buy goods. Such as canned goods, string, Ivory soap, rice, flour, sugar, all sorts of candy and penny candy for the kids. Also, if you have not noticed today is the anniversary of the day that we left Russia and got on the boat. Today we are going to have a huge dinner with all these different food to not only celebrate for our tenth anniversary, but also Bertha is having another baby!

March/22/1905

Dear Journal,

Our shop is doing very well. We have named the shop "Kelman's General Store". We been getting a lot of sales and we have also been in the newspaper a lot. When Bertha had her baby it turned out it was a girl and we named the girl Florence. Isador has been going to school and he knows English very well even though we taught him Yiddish first. He is also getting in some trouble lately because he is in a gang and kids have thrown bricks in our house. I have been studying the American culture some more as well; finally I know what the president is and who the president is now. The president is somewhat close in stature to the czar, but a much fairer leader the first president was George Washington during the Revolutionary war, and the president now is Teddy Roosevelt. I am so thankful that we have made a new life in the United States. Although we have had to work hard and sacrificed many things, this truly is a great country, where there are many opportunities. I hope that my children will be educated and have an honorable profession. Bertha and I would be so proud.